

fact, recess is a critical time for citizen legislators like ourselves. Recess is an opportunity for many of us to go home and live for a little while under the laws that we have passed. We talk with our neighbors. We visit local restaurants, grocery stores, and spend a lot of time with constituents all across our states. We hear what the people think about our work. I must say that while I was in Idaho over the Easter recess, the feedback I got on spending by this Congress was not good.

We have before us another emergency supplemental funding bill. The chairman of the Senate Budget Committee has called these emergency funding bills "shadow budgets." I agree with his view. We are simply funding outside of the regular budget process the known costs of our war on terror. That has to end. In the case of hurricane relief, I understand the need to provide emergency funding as quickly as possible, and I know we cannot always budget exactly for an emergency. However, I am increasingly frustrated with this Congress's refusal to make any adjustments to other spending priorities to account for the need to rebuild the gulf coast. We are now into our fourth emergency supplemental in less than a year for the rebuilding efforts along the gulf coast. It is time that we start paying for some of this spending.

Before I left for the recess, I voted in favor of the emergency supplemental appropriations bill that was before the Appropriations Committee. I cast a "yes" vote with some hesitation, in light of the concerns I have just mentioned. The bill I voted for would have provided \$96 billion in emergency spending, mainly for our efforts in the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and the continued reconstruction of the badly damaged gulf coast region.

The President submitted a request to Congress for \$92.2 billion. Yet I was voting to add \$4 billion to the amount requested by the President. But I voted yes because I recognize that not all wisdom is found at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. Congress has a responsibility to scrutinize and improve upon the administration's request. And we certainly have the right and the responsibility to add or subtract from that request based on needs that we identify. I believe the bill I voted for in committee did just that.

Chairman COCHRAN and Senator BYRD held hearings on the administration's request. They identified shortcomings and they changed the bill to address those needs. So I supported \$96 billion as the level of funding needed to address urgent needs across this country related to our war on terror and our disaster recovery efforts.

Unfortunately, a series of amendments adopted by voice vote by the committee after I left have pushed the cost of the legislation now before us to over \$106 billion. That is \$14 billion above what the administration requested and \$10 billion above what Chairman COCHRAN and ranking member BYRD recommended to all of us.

Every Member of this institution has to draw the line and decide how much is too much. In my mind, and in the minds of many Idahoans, this level of funding is simply too high.

In fact, last week I joined with 34 of my Senate colleagues in sending a letter to President Bush saying we will vote to support his veto if the price tag of this bill does not come down. Enough is enough, and I am proud to stand with my colleagues and say so.

The people of Idaho are honest, hard-working Americans who will continue to staunchly support our military and compassionately lend a helping hand to our fellow citizens on the gulf coast. That message has been loud and clear to me over this and other congressional recesses. However, when Congress tries to take advantage of their patriotism and generosity, the people of Idaho deserve to know that their Senator will stand up and say no. I believe that this bill is irresponsible, and that is why I am standing up and saying no.

I want to be clear so that all of my colleagues and my constituents understand my position and why I am voicing my frustration with this bill. My frustration is not about supporting our military. I support our military and I am committed to providing them with the tools they need. My frustration is not about supporting recovery efforts in the gulf coast. I am committed to helping the people in that region rebuild and move on with their lives. My frustration is with the Senate spending billions upon billions of dollars in such an irresponsible manner. The people of Idaho have charged me with being a good steward of their taxpayer dollars, and they expect me to work hard and make sure those dollars are being spent wisely. This bill does not do that. We can meet the needs of our military, the gulf coast, and other national priorities in a fiscally responsible manner. We have to be willing to make tough decisions and tighten our belts. Together, we can get spending under control and regain the confidence of the American taxpayers.

Mr. President, I also wish to talk a little bit about the budget as it relates to where we are on the supplemental, along with this important issue of energy because, when I was home over the recess, as most of us were, the public was talking about a lot of issues. They were talking about energy, although it hadn't spiked the way it is spiking now. But they were also talking about deficits and responsible spending on the part of Government and making sure we do it right. And it is tremendously important that we do.

The supplemental is too big at this moment. The President has sent us a message, as he should have—and I support that message—that we have emergencies, and we ought to address emergencies. But we ought not put on emergency budgets those kinds of expenditures that could well be utilized and brought into the appropriate budget. I have said to our chairman—and I re-

spect his work, and I am on the Appropriations Committee—that we have to bring this supplemental down a bit and get our deficits under control. We have a war, we have Katrina, we have a national disaster beyond anything we have ever faced.

Americans understand belt-tightening. They also understand sharing. This is about belt-tightening; it is about sharing. It is not about funding every idea that comes along, as worthy as it might be, against making sure that we get Louisiana and we get Mississippi responsibly financed in a redeveloping, restructuring mode—not excessively—and that we make sure our men and women in Iraq are appropriately funded. Those are the critical issues.

My time is limited, but I have said to our chairman and I say it again: It is important we understand that the \$92 billion to \$96 billion range is where we have to get this supplemental, and I am going to work hard with the chairman to do it, to do it appropriately, to be selective in that which we fund but to be responsible in that which we send to the President in our work with the House to assure that we have the emergencies funded.

Supplemental emergency funding ought not be a shadow budget. Here we are now in our fourth emergency supplemental within a budget cycle. I don't think our budget system works very well if we can't do better than that and argue that everything is an emergency and, therefore, somehow it doesn't fit under the caps. That is not the way our public and our taxpayers who finance this big government of ours want us to operate. Somehow we have to get that under control.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

ENERGY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today as I stand here, back in Michigan the gas prices have risen to \$3.10 a gallon. At \$3.10 a gallon, that is the highest price at the pump that folks are paying than ever before as they get up to go to work, take the kids to school, as our farmers are preparing the fields, and as our business people are on the road. Folks are feeling the squeeze—one more squeeze.

We already have in Michigan a situation where we are seeing job loss or wages being reduced, health care costs going up, pensions that may not be there for people; things that are squeezing people on all sides—the higher cost of college. Part of that is due to actions taken in the Congress and at the White House. To add insult to injury, we are seeing now over \$3 a gallon for gasoline, and I know in other States we have seen as much as \$4 for folks who are just trying to make it, just trying to get to work, just trying to take care of their families.

When they look at this picture, they see several things. They see the highest